

to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to remove or keep the official ban on U.S. travel to that inhospitable, barren land.

Sheehan insistently discounted the importance of this trip, and Albright may yet decide to keep the ban on. But this maneuvering must be viewed for what it is: a piece in a pattern of endgame diplomacy by the Clinton administration. Improving relations with states once known as rogues and lifting or easing sanctions where possible (with the exception of still politically useful Cuba) has become an undeclared but important objective for the Clintonites.

The push to close the books on the bombing of Pan Am 103 over Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988, and other Libyan misdeeds is in part a response on the White House from Britain, Egypt and U.S. oil companies, all of which argue the case for rewarding Moammar Gadhafi's recent abstinence from terrorist exploits.

But it also reflects President Clinton's concern over the diplomatic and humanitarian effects of open-ended sanctions. "The lack of international consensus on sanctions and the costs that brings has bothered him for some time," says one well-placed official.

There is a case to be made for reviewing and adjusting U.S. sanctions as conditions change: Clinton has in fact allowed Albright to make that case publicly and persuasively on Iran. She has skillfully mixed approval of a trend to internal democracy with strictures about Iran's continuing depredations abroad and let the public judge each step as it is taken.

But there is no similar intellectual honesty on Libya. There seems to be instead a stealth policy to bring change but not accept political responsibility for giving up on confronting the dictator who would have had to authorize Libyan participation in the bombing.

Last year the White House overrode skepticism from Justice Department officials and other opposition within the administration and agreed to Gadhafi's terms for a trial of two Libyan underling in The Hague, under Scottish law. Their trial begins in May.

"There was an unvoiced sense in these meetings that the Pan Am 103 families had to get over it and move on with their lives. The trial would help with that as well as with our diplomatic objectives," said one official who participated in the contentious high-level interagency sessions. "But if these two are acquitted, it is all over. There will be no more investigations, and no more international pressure on Gadhafi. It is a huge risk."

Worse: It is a huge risk that Bill Clinton is willing to take but not explain honestly to the American people. For shame, Mr. President.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 3, 2000]

THE LIBYA THAW

Four American diplomats recently returned from Libya, where they were sent by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to determine whether it is time for the United States to lift the ban on using U.S. passports to visit Moammar Gadhafi's realm. The trip follows other steps hinting at a Clinton administration intention to thaw relations with a regime that remains on the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism.

The most notorious terrorist act linked to Tripoli is the Dec. 21, 1988, bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The attack killed 270 people, including 189 Americans. After an investigation fingered two Libyan agents, the United States won U.S. Security Council approval for sanctions against Libya. Last year the Clinton administration agreed to "suspend" sanctions after

Mr. Gadhafi consented to hand the two men over for a trial under Scottish law at a special court in Holland. The Libyan dictator did so only after being satisfied, via a U.S.-vetted letter from U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, that the trial, which opens May 3, would focus on the two suspects and not on his regime.

In striking this compromise, the Clinton administration made clear that it would not approve permanent lifting of the U.N. sanctions or the lifting of unilateral U.S. sanctions until Mr. Gadhafi meets other demands, such as paying compensation, accepting Libyan responsibility for the crime and revealing all that his regime knows about it. But the administration has not pressed those issues at the U.N., and its diplomatic body language suggests it is trying to wrap up a long battle that has often placed the United States at odds with European allies who rely on Libyan oil.

Perhaps the administration believes the economic and diplomatic costs of a hard line on Libya now outweigh the benefits. Perhaps Mr. Gadhafi's recent expulsion from Libya of the Abu Nidal organization deserves to be rewarded. And perhaps it is futile to insist that Mr. Gadhafi tell everything he knows about the case, however contradictory it may be to prosecute the two bombers while settling, at most, for compensation from Mr. Gadhafi, who almost certainly would have ordered such an attack.

Whatever the rationale, the American public is entitled to a full explanation. But, with the exception of a speech by Assistant Secretary of State Ronald Neumann last November, the Clinton administration has kept its Libya decision-making in the shadows. Despite requests from the Pan Am 103 victims' families, it won't release the Annan letter, citing diplomatic privacy. A legitimate point—but it inevitably leaves many wondering whether the letter contains inappropriate promises to Mr. Gadhafi. If there's nothing untoward about the Clinton administration's overall Libya policy, why doesn't Secretary Albright, or, better, the president, do more to help the public understand it?

SENATE RESOLUTION 288—AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE CHAMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. LOTT (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 288

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph the United States Senate in actual session on Tuesday, June 6, 2000, at the hour of 2:15 p.m.

SEC. 2. The Sergeant at Arms of the Senate is authorized and directed to make the necessary arrangements therefor, which arrangements shall provide for a minimum of disruption to Senate proceedings.

SENATE RESOLUTION 289—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN CUBA

Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself, Mr. HELMS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MACK, and

Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 289

Whereas the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, provides a forum for discussing human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance;

Whereas the United States Department of State 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, released on February 25, 2000, includes the following statements describing conditions in Cuba:

(1) "Cuba is a totalitarian state controlled by President Fidel Castro.... President Castro exercises control over all aspects of Cuban life.... The Communist Party is the only legal political entity.... There are no contested elections.... The judiciary is completely subordinate to the government and to the Communist Party...."

(2) "The Ministry of Interior... investigates and actively suppresses opposition and dissent. It maintains a pervasive system of vigilance through undercover agents, informers, the rapid response brigades, and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's)...."

(3) "[The government] continued systematically to violate fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens. Citizens do not have the right to change their government peacefully.... The authorities routinely continued to harass, threaten, arbitrarily arrest, detain, imprison, and defame human rights advocates and members of independent professional associations, including journalists, economists, doctors, and lawyers, often with the goal of coercing them into leaving the country...."

(4) "The government denied citizens the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association.... It limited the distribution of foreign publications and news to selected party faithful and maintained strict censorship of news and information to the public. The government kept tight restrictions on freedom of movement, including foreign travel...."

(5) "The government continued to subject those who disagreed with it to 'acts of repudiation'. At government instigation, members of state-controlled mass organizations, fellow workers, or neighbors of intended victims are obliged to stage public protests against those who dissent with the government's policies.... Those who refuse to participate in these actions face disciplinary action, including loss of employment...."

(6) "Detainees and prisoners often are subjected to repeated, vigorous interrogations designed to coerce them into signing incriminating statements.... The government does not permit independent monitoring of prison conditions...."

(7) "Arbitrary arrest and detention continued to be problems, and they remained the government's most effective weapons to harass opponents.... [T]he Constitution states that all legally recognized civil liberties can be denied to anyone who actively opposes the 'decision of the Cuban people to build socialism'. The authorities invoke this sweeping authority to deny due process to those detained on purported state security grounds...."

(8) "The Penal Code includes the concept of 'dangerousness', defined as the 'special proclivity of a person to commit crimes, demonstrated by his conduct in manifest contradiction of socialist norms'. If the police decide that a person exhibits signs of dangerousness, they may bring the offender before a court or subject him to 'therapy' or